

Dear Editor,

I am truly sick, saddened and shaken to my core by the recent events that took place in El Paso and Dayton, Ohio. I am broken for the people who were targeted simply because of who they were. We cannot allow bigotry, racism and hate to prevail in this Country! No one deserves to be hunted like animals for any reason!

I DO believe in the 2nd Amendment, but I also believe some reform and controls are necessary. Therefore, for my personal part in voting for the 2nd Amendment Sanctuary County Resolution, I don't feel confident that I did the right thing. I get why people asked for it. They are afraid that their right to own guns might be taken away. I don't want that for responsible gun owners either. But perhaps before hastily voting, we should have taken more time to read and research and deeply understand what kind of message we wanted to send. In my heart of hearts, I was not completely ok with it, and I should have taken a step back. I know those who were there saw my struggle with the matter. I don't believe the 2nd Amendment is going anywhere, nor would I want it to. I just want to be fully informed and vote with confidence and I didn't on this matter. I'm still struggling with what the right thing is to do.

I was told that gun free zones invite killers, but I believe that a lawless society also invites killers. We are not the same Country we used to be, things have changed, the hearts of people have changed. We cannot allow the horrific, senseless acts that took place last week to be just another in the latest acts of terror, hate and gun violence that we allow to fade into a distant memory until the next mass shooting happens. I don't pretend to have all the answers, or to say that I know exactly what the right thing is to do, but I will say that what we're doing now, as a nation, is not working. We want to build a wall around us to keep people in peril out, and yet we are surrounded by home grown terrorists right here in this beautiful USA. Gun rights are for those who are capable, responsible and fully trained to use them properly. We have to work on methods to help keep guns out of the wrong hands. I don't think we can keep all guns out of the hands of criminals and killers, I'm not that naïve, but what I do know is that what we are currently doing in this Country is not working by a long shot. Mass killings are on the rise. I want to be a part of the movement that changes that! What can we do? What are some ideas that we can send to those at the top, that would help them make us a safer Country? How can we convince our politicians to come together and work for common good and not play the game of partisan politics? We've got to find a way to close the gap and prevent more people from dying.

Please know that I don't think of myself as a politician, I am a public servant who is a human being and I am only in my position as County Commissioner because people have asked me to serve them. I don't do things for political gain, as personally, I have nothing to lose when it comes to being a political figure vs. a member of the general public. I hope that people believe that I am doing my job well and that they believe in the things I stand up for. I will admit when I am wrong and welcome your input as to what I can personally do to better serve you all.

I send my love and condolences to all of those who have ever lost loved ones to gun violence. I pray that no one else ever find themselves in that situation. To our sister city El Paso, stay strong and thank you for showing us what brothers and sisters do for one another when a community is devastated! You have shown the world that love outweighs hate, and that hate will bind us, not separate us!

Respectfully yours,

Brenda Silva Bentley
Presidio County Commissioner, Pct. 1